



THE H.M.S. HOOD ASSOCIATION

(Official Website www.hmshood.com)

Message from the Chairman

Shipmates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

MOST IMPORTANT: The date of next year's Reunion Dinner had been previously notified as 24th May 2014. As we were unable to forward reserve our weekends at The Maritime Club due to the proposal to hold the Reunion elsewhere, by the time we had received member's wishes and the Committee had accepted the majority result, The Maritime Club was not available for our event. I checked and no other suitable hotel in Portsmouth was available. **PLEASE NOTE THE REUNION HAS HAD TO BE RESCHEDULED FOR SATURDAY 31ST MAY 2014 AT THE MARITIME CLUB, PORTSMOUTH.** We apologise for any problems or inconvenience this may have caused.

Following my two illnesses earlier this year, which ultimately resulted in my hospitalisation, I was advised to take life much easier. I am still undergoing treatment for the after effects. As a result I had decided to step down as Chairman and transfer the Chairman's responsibilities to Keith Evans the Vice Chairman until a new Chairman can be elected at the 2014 AGM. However before this could happen I had to assemble all the records of the work I have undertaken during my time as Chairman. This is composed of some 900 letters and many other documents represented by 1,154 files containing over 153 MB of data. In addition I have large amounts of spread sheet files including all the accounting data and a copy of the membership database.

Originally I was invited to join the Association by John Williams, the previous Chairman, following my purchase from British Railways of the mainline passenger locomotive 50031 in 1991 and its rededication to HMS Hood by Ted Briggs at Alresford. The service was conducted by Rev. Ron Paterson and attended by several veterans and their wives. The event was reported with coverage on the local ITV news that evening. The locomotive had been stripped of its Hood nameplates and crests prior to purchase.

In 1998 I was asked by Ted Briggs to become 'Chairman in Waiting' following Tom Hooper's stroke, the then Vice Chairman, and John Williams' illnesses which were becoming more frequent. I was persuaded to accept the role and reluctantly became Chairman when John Williams decided to stand down in 2001 after seventeen years in the post.

My first job on being elected was to formalise the operation and introduce transparent recording systems. The only records which had been kept in the previous years were the membership list and database. I produced an end of year account which identified the income groups and expenditure types. I believe this was the first time this information had been presented to the members. Each item of expenditure was available on separate sheets for review by any member. I also introduced elements of cost control where any proposal for additional expenditure had to be accompanied by the required increase in membership fees. This idea was new to some of the Committee members but is standard business practice.

When Ken Clark had to move out of his home for six months due to a fire, I was the only other Committee member at the time who was computer literate and could continue to maintain the membership database. This occurred again a short time later when Ken stood down as Treasurer, Membership Administrator and Sales due to his failing health. He had previously ceased editing and producing the Newsletter.

My significant financial interest in railway preservation has brought me in contact with several railway operating companies. This has resulted in a generous donation to our funds earlier this millennium of almost £5,000 from EWS the freight operator.

Amongst other achievements during my Chairmanship I wrote the draft Constitution for review by the Committee and managed the project for our Memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire. This latter activity included the design, plan approval, tender and contract documents writing with specific legal clauses for the materials to be used, construction and installation. I monitored the work at all stages. Since 2001, I have organised everything associated with every AGM and Reunion Dinner and have printed almost all of our hand-outs except the Newsletter and Constitution saving the Association significant printing costs.

With only about ten veterans remaining, in recent years I have been aware that our main aims would have to be varied. The Committee have discussed our future over the last two years, but this year we had decided to invite ideas from the floor at the AGM to supplement the Committee's views.

Until next year's AGM, please address your correspondence to the Acting Chairman: Cmdr. Keith Evans RN Rtd., Whitegate, Chilcrofts Road, Kingsley Green, Haslemere, Surrey, GU27 2LS. Your membership renewal fees should be sent to the Treasurer: George Wronski, 6 Ramsdell Road, Fleet, Hampshire, GU51 1DB.

At next year's AGM, Derick Collins intends to retire from the Committee due to his declining health. Therefore it will be necessary to elect a Chairman, the Newsletter editor, production and distribution and the Membership Secretary

I hope I have been able to contribute to the Association in the manner Ted Briggs wished of me. I wish to thank the original Committee members and the current incumbents for their dedication, hard work and support during the last twelve years. It must be remembered we are all volunteers. I wish the Association a long and prosperous future.

God bless you all,

Peter Heys.

Important Events

- **2013 Remembrance Service:** 1045 on Monday 11th November at Portsmouth Naval War Memorial
- **2014 Boldre Church Service:** 1100 on Sunday 18th May
- **2014 AGM/Reunion Dinner:** **Saturday 31st May** at The Royal Maritime Club
- **2014 Memorial Service:** **Sunday 1st June** at St Ann's Church



Boldre Service the annual Service of Commemoration for the 1415 ships company who lost their lives on 24th May 1941 was held at Boldre parish church of St John the Baptist on Sunday 2nd June 2013 at 1100. The service was conducted by Reverend Neil Smart who welcomed us all to this service of Commemoration. Standards were paraded by HMS Hood Association, The Royal British Legion, Lymington Branch and the London Sea cadets. First lesson was read by Commodore of HMS Collingwood Mike Mansergh CBE RN and the second by Lieutenant Commander Giles Cross RN. The sermon was given by Reverend Michael Meachin RN and The Act of Remembrance by our President Rear Admiral Philip Wilcocks CB RN. Following the service refreshments were provided by the parish ladies. The service was very well attended by the local community and it was pleasing to see so many Hood members from across the country attending this year. Our standard bearer was Rob White. During the service the BBC

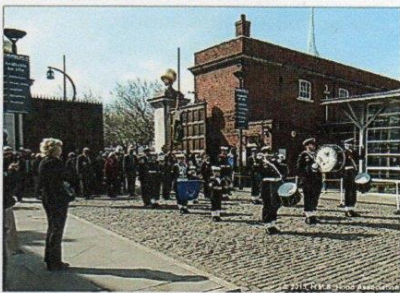
were filming as part of a TV documentary about HMS Hood, which will be part of a series entitled "Ships That Built the Commonwealth" this will be shown later.

Annual General Meeting & Reunion Dinner

Our reunion week end was held in the Royal Maritime Club, Portsmouth 24-26th May 2013. The AGM was well attended on Saturday at 1600 in the Brocks Bar. Statutory items were progressed and the current committee were re-elected. The main topic under discussion was the future of the Association and how it can broaden our appeal to people especially to the younger generation and encompass modern communication technologies. After much discussion it was agreed that a subcommittee be formed and many members agreed to be involved. James Warrand agreed to co-ordinate the subcommittee's views and will present their deliberations at a future date. Following the AGM members gathered at 1830 in the Brocks bar for pre-dinner drinks prior to the annual dinner at 1900. This year's Guest of Honour was Robert White, accompanied by his wife Susan. Chairman Peter Heys introduced Rob who many will remember was involved in the Channel 4 programme on the search for HMS Hood. Over many years Rob has been a great supporter of the association through his contacts in the media world and assisted in acquiring funding for media projects. The Chairman on behalf of the association presented Rob with an engraved bell that he was delighted to receive and expressed that it was an honour and a privilege to be a member of this fine Association and was always delighted to help in any way.

Sunday was the 70th Anniversary of the Battle of the Atlantic, and the committee felt it appropriate that we should hold our service in the Portsmouth Dockyard naval church of Saint Ann's. The band of T.S Tenacity together with

members formed up just inside the main dockyard gate and marched to Saint Ann's church. The standards of the Wrens and HMS Hood Associations were paraded. Rob White was our standard bearer. The Venerable John Green CB our Association chaplain who on retiring as Chaplain of the Fleet was appointed Archdeacon of Coventry gave the sermon. After the service the T.S. Tenacity band played outside as the congregation left which was much appreciated.



T.S Tenacity band accompanied Members to Saint Ann's church



Members marching to Saint Ann's



Inside Saint Ann's with standards raised HMS Hood on the Left and WRENS Association on the Right

Royal Naval Boys Memorial

You will recall that on the 18th March 2012 at the Portsmouth Cathedral a memorial stone was dedicated to the 534 boys under the age of 18, of which 71 served on Hood, who gave their lives during WW2 and many members made generous donations to this worthy cause. Since then copies of Remembrance Books have been dedicated which can be viewed on request in the following places:-

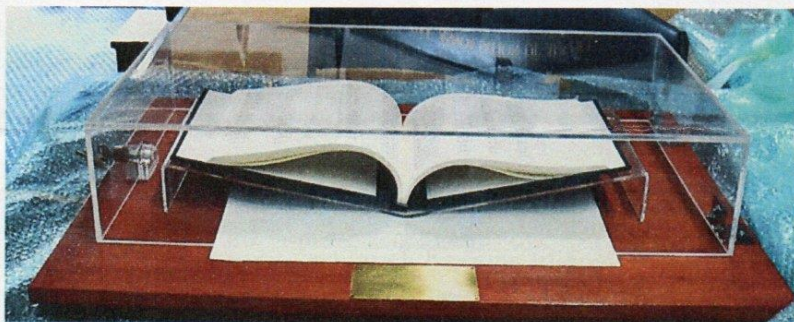
Portsmouth – Anglican Cathedral, Southsea, Portsmouth.- A chained edition for viewing is placed on a seat beside the memorial stone in the southwest ambulatory of the Cathedral at the west end of the nave, close to the southwest doors. Another copy is held in the Vestry

Devonport–St Nicholas Church, Royal Naval Dockyard. Lt Cdr David Scott RN Rtd is currently investigating the possibility of having it moved to the Cambridge Chapel in the Devonport Heritage Centre where it will be more visible. This move has the full support of the RN Boys Memorial Fund.

Chatham–St Georges Chapel, Chatham. A copy is held in St Georges Chapel which can be viewed on request.

Liverpool–Anglican Cathedral, Liverpool. A copy was dedicated on 28th May 2013 during the Battle of the Atlantic 70th Anniversary Commemoration service which has been placed on a newly restored Lectern in the Library of Remembrance and can be viewed on request.

HMS Ganges Association. Melbourne, Australia. It has been confirmed that a copy will now be on display in HMAS Cerberus Museum. HMS Ganges Association arranged the provision of the Perspex display case.



HMS Ganges Association, Melbourne, Book of Remembrance display case

The RN Boys Memorial project is now complete. The team lead by Jim Reed who was a Boy Seaman at the commencement of WW2, would like to thank all supporters together with all those who generously donated to the project, without their support the project could not have completed.

A letter was sent on behalf of the HMS Hood Association and especially on behalf of the 71 boys of HMS Hood's ships company, saying that we are very grateful for all their dedication in fulfilling this project and wished them all good fortune for the future.

Arctic Medal

After many years of campaigning lead by Commander Grenfell and his supporters recognition at last was achieved for all those who battled in the arctic campaign. I only know one member, Alec Kellaway, who has received his medal

and we congratulate him and any other member who has been recognised for their dedicated service. Commander Grenfell was in poor health and regrettably he crossed the bar shortly after receiving his medal but had the satisfaction of knowing that his perseverance and dedication was at long last recognised.

Mers el Kebir Story

The production of a film will hopefully enable everyone to understand the true reasoning behind this action.

**Caramie Productions presents a
feature film project with the Mighty Hood:**

Catapult: The warriors of the unknown

Status: in development

Synopsis: Summer of 1940, before the skies of England were abuzz with the Battle of Britain, the single most decisive and divisive action of the war took place in a small harbour off the coast of North Africa, the Royal Navy attacked and destroyed the French Fleet as it lay at its moorings. Two weeks before the French and British had been allies in the war against Germany.

Only through the understanding and friendship of Captain Holland of the Royal Navy, and Lieutenant Dufay of the Marine Nationale that disaster might have been averted. But events rapidly overtake them, and in the misunderstandings and misjudgements, the increasingly frenzied efforts of the protagonists to avoid disaster and the dreadful inevitability of the end, it was a 'Greek Tragedy' killing many French sailors; there was no Glory in this action. To the French the action was murderous aggression; to the sailors who carried it out seemed incomprehensible folly; to the British government in London it was a grim but unavoidable necessity which galvanized support from the US for Churchill to continue the war, alone if need be.

"Why making this movie?" Andy Poulastides, screenwriter

"The Project began out of my fascination with HMS HOOD and the desire to tell an original story about HOOD. When I first read about the events at Mers el Kebir and Operation, I discovered that by and large no-one had a clue about the attack, or its impact on the war. On a very fundamental level my aim here is to bring back Hood and once again have her sail (digitally) the Mediterranean Sea. Our aim is to create a film where a true event is given an honest and sincere film adaptation and a chance for the story to be brought to a new generation who will help keep alive the memory of both the Hood, and the events of 'Catapult'."

"When the movie will be released?" Sophie Caramigeas, Producer

"Obviously such a project will take time and money, but we are working closely with the HMS Hood association and the French Association of Le drame de Mers El-Kebir to be respectful and honest in the retelling of the tale and to ensure the film is as authentic as possible. Having strong support from the Association members is key for us. We are currently working to secure funding so we can attach both prestige director and English and French actors. The release date that we think would be ideal is July 2015 for the 75th Anniversary of Catapult and the 70th Anniversary of the end of WWII. It is important to us that this movie will be dedicated to all Navy crew members that were lost during these particular events and also during WWII."

CARAMIE PRODUCTIONS is privately owned UK corporation that was established in 2012, based in London. The company plan is to develop and produce British quality films or TV series appealing to a large audience. Please visit our website at www.caramie-productions.co.uk

Nixi Taverner

It is with much regret that we report the death from Alzheimer's disease in hospital on 29th September of Nixi Taverner at the age of 88 years, the legally adopted daughter of her uncle Captain Rory O'Connor RN. Nixi had a distinguished career as a teacher, writer of successful educational publications and was a popular lecturer in the UK and overseas.

She was blessed with 2 sons, a daughter and 7 grandchildren one, of whom who is named Rory after his illustrious great grandfather is a member of the HMS Neptune Association. In retirement she wrote HOOD'S LEGACY (2001) in which she acknowledges her debt to Ted Briggs late President of the Association, for his Association archives, to the officers of the committee for their help and support and also to the many Association members who have kindly contributed their memories of service in the MIGHTY HOOD.

Nixi also wrote a TORCH AMONG TAPERS being the life and career of Captain Rory O'Connor which has a reference to his time as the Commander of HMS Hood 1933-36 and his "How to run a ship in Ten Commandments" Rory was lost in HMS Neptune on 21 December 1941.

Our sympathy to Nixi's family. Her memorial service is to be at St James Church New Malden at 1300 on 23 October and will be attended by Vice Chairman Keith Evans, among others